

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 10, 2003

AMENDED IN SENATE FEBRUARY 18, 2003

Senate Joint Resolution

No. 1

Introduced by Senator Poochigian

(Principal coauthors: Senators Scott and Speier)

(Principal coauthors: Assembly Members Aghazarian, Frommer,
Liu, Samuelian, and Simitian)

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~~Chesbro~~, ~~Denham~~, ~~Ducheny~~, ~~Dunn~~, ~~Escutia~~, ~~Figueroa~~, ~~Florez~~,
~~Hollingsworth~~, ~~Johnson~~, ~~Karnette~~, ~~Knight~~, ~~Kuehl~~, ~~Machado~~,
~~Margett~~, ~~McClintock~~, ~~McPherson~~, ~~Morrow~~, ~~Murray~~, ~~Oller~~,
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~~Vasconcellos~~, and ~~Vincent~~)

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La Malfa, Leslie, Levine, Longville, Maddox, Maze, McCarthy,
Mountjoy, Nunez, Pacheco, Plescia, Spitzer, Strickland, Vargas,
Wyland, and Yee) ~~Yee~~, ~~Berg~~, ~~Bogh~~, ~~Campbell~~, ~~Canciamilla~~, ~~Chu~~,
~~Cohn~~, ~~Corbett~~, ~~Diaz~~, ~~Dutra~~, ~~Dymally~~, ~~Firebaugh~~, ~~Goldberg~~,
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~~Ridley-Thomas~~, ~~Runner~~, ~~Salinas~~, ~~Steinberg~~, ~~Wesson~~, ~~Wiggins~~, and
~~Wolk~~)

December 2, 2002

Senate Joint Resolution No. 1—Relative to the Armenian Genocide.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SJR 1, as amended, Poochigian. Armenian Genocide: Day of Remembrance.

This measure would designate April 24, 2003, as the “California Day of Remembrance for the Armenian Genocide of 1915–1923.” It would memorialize the Congress of the United States to act likewise to commemorate the Armenian Genocide.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, The Armenian people, living in their 3,000 year
2 historic homeland in eastern Asia Minor and throughout the
3 Ottoman Empire, were subjected to severe persecution and brutal
4 injustice by the rulers of the Ottoman Empire before and after the
5 turn of the twentieth century, including widespread massacres,
6 usurpation of land and property, and acts of wanton destruction
7 during the period from 1894 to 1896, and again in 1909; and

8 WHEREAS, The horrible experience of the Armenians at the
9 hands of their oppressors culminated in 1915 in what is known by
10 historians as the “First Genocide of the Twentieth Century,” and
11 as the prototype of modern-day mass killing; and

12 WHEREAS, The Armenian Genocide began with the arrest,
13 exile, and murder of hundreds of Armenian intellectuals, and
14 political, religious, and business leaders, starting on April 24,
15 1915; and

16 WHEREAS, The regime then in control of the empire, known
17 as the “Young Turks,” planned and executed the unspeakable
18 atrocities committed against the Armenian people from 1915
19 through 1923, which included the torture, starvation, and murder
20 of 1,500,000 Armenians, death marches into the Syrian desert, the
21 forced exile of more than 500,000 innocent people, and the loss of
22 the traditional Armenian homelands; and

23 WHEREAS, While there were some Turks and others who
24 jeopardized their safety in order to protect Armenians from the
25 crimes being perpetrated by the Young Turk regime, the genocide
26 of the Armenian people constituted one of the most egregious
27 violations of human rights in the history of the world; and

28 WHEREAS, The United States Ambassador to the Ottoman
29 Empire, Henry Morgenthau, Sr., stated “Whatever crimes the
30 most perverted instincts of the human mind can devise, and
31 whatever refinements of persecutions and injustice the most



1 debased imagination can conceive, became the daily misfortunes
2 of this devoted people. I am confident that the whole history of the
3 human race contains no such horrible episode as this. The great
4 massacres and persecutions of the past seem almost insignificant
5 when compared to the sufferings of the Armenian race in 1915.
6 The killing of the Armenian people was accompanied by the
7 systematic destruction of churches, schools, libraries, treasures of
8 art, and cultural monuments in an attempt to eliminate all traces of
9 a noble civilization with a history of more than 3,000 years”; and

10 WHEREAS, Winston Churchill wrote: “As for Turkish
11 atrocities: ... massacring uncounted thousands of helpless
12 Armenians, men, women, and children together, whole districts
13 blotted out in one administrative holocaust—these were beyond
14 human redress”; and

15 WHEREAS, Contemporary newspapers like the New York
16 Times commonly carried headlines such as “Tales of Armenian
17 Horrors Confirmed,” “Million Armenians Killed or in Exile,”
18 and “Wholesale Massacre of Armenians by Turks”; and

19 WHEREAS, Adolph Hitler, in persuading his army
20 commanders on the eve of World War II that the merciless
21 persecution and killing of Poles, Jews, and other peoples would
22 bring no retribution, declared, “Who, after all, speaks today of the
23 annihilation of the Armenians”; and

24 WHEREAS, Unlike other peoples and governments that have
25 admitted and denounced the abuses and crimes of predecessor
26 regimes, and despite the overwhelming weight of evidence, the
27 Republic of Turkey has inexplicably and adamantly denied the
28 occurrence of the crimes against humanity committed by the
29 Young Turk rulers, and those denials compound the grief of the
30 few remaining survivors of the atrocities, desecrate the memory of
31 the victims, and cause continuing trauma and pain to the
32 descendants of the victims; and

33 WHEREAS, Nations that have officially recognized the
34 Armenian Genocide have been subjected to retaliation and
35 condemnation by Turkey; and

36 WHEREAS, There have been concerted efforts to revise history
37 through the dissemination of propaganda suggesting that
38 Armenians were responsible for their fate in the period from 1915
39 through 1923 and by the funding of programs at American



1 educational institutions for the purpose of furthering the cause of
2 this revisionism; and

3 WHEREAS, Leaders of nations with strategic, commercial, and
4 cultural ties to the Republic of Turkey should be reminded of their
5 duty to encourage Turkish officials to desist from efforts to distort
6 facts and deny the history of events surrounding the Armenian
7 Genocide; and

8 WHEREAS, The accelerated level and scope of denial and
9 revisionism, coupled with the passage of time and the fact that few
10 survivors remain who serve as reminders of indescribable brutality
11 and torment, compel a sense of urgency in efforts to solidify
12 recognition and reaffirmation of historical truth; and

13 WHEREAS, By honoring the survivors and consistently
14 remembering and forcefully condemning the atrocities committed
15 against the Armenian people as well as the persecution of the
16 Assyrian and Greek populations of the Ottoman Empire, we guard
17 against repetition of the crime of genocide; and

18 WHEREAS, California has become home to the largest
19 population of Armenians in the United States, and those citizens
20 have enriched our state through leadership in the fields of
21 academia, medicine, business, agriculture, government, and the
22 arts and are proud and patriotic practitioners of American
23 citizenship; and

24 WHEREAS, The State of California has been at the forefront in
25 encouraging and promoting a curriculum relating to human rights
26 and genocide in order to empower future generations to prevent
27 recurrence of the crime of genocide; now, therefore, be it

28 *Resolved by the Senate and Assembly of the State of California,*
29 *jointly,* That the Legislature of the State of California hereby
30 designates April 24, 2003, as the “California Day of
31 Remembrance for the Armenian Genocide of 1915–1923”; and be
32 it further

33 *Resolved,* That the State of California commends its
34 conscientious educators who teach about human rights and
35 genocide; and be it further

36 *Resolved,* That the State of California respectfully
37 memorializes the Congress of the United States to act likewise to
38 commemorate the Armenian Genocide; and be it further



1 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
2 this resolution to the President of the United States, Members of
3 the United States Congress, and the Governor.

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